(b) Prior to the constitution of the Central Board for Prevention and Control of Water Pollution in September, 1974, there was no systematic monitoring of air and water quality in the country. Data collected by the Central Board from the river basin studies and water quality monitoring stations, do not indicate any clear trend of increase or decrease of water pollution. Air quality monitoring studies carried out by Central Board through its net-work of monitoring stations do not indicate any significant increase or decrease in the different parameters of air quality.

Regional Rural Banks

1397. SHRI J. P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of Regional Rural Banks in the country;

(b) how many of them are running on profit and how many are running in loss;

(c) what are the reasons for their running in loss;

(d) what is the accumulated loss of these banks; and

(e) what measures Government have taken to improve their functioning?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) At present there are 196 Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) in the country.

(b) to (e) Out of the 194 Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) in position at the end of December 1986, 156 RRBs had accumulated losses amounting to Rs. 94.31 crores.

The main reasons for such losses are (i) rapid branch expansion by these banks; (ii) low business potential due to locational disadvantages of the centres served by these banks and limited clientele consisting of persons with an annual income upto Rs. 6500/-only; (iii) increase in establishment costs due to upward revision in pay and allowances etc.

Pursuant to the recommendations made by the Working Group on RRBs a number of steps have been taken for improving the viability of RRBs. These include (i) release of additional share capital to RRBs with satisfactory track record; (ii) enlarging the scope of their lending by allowing them to lend to public bodies/Village Panchayats etc., (iii) lowering of interest rate on refinance provided to them by the sponsoring banks; and (iv) investment of their SLR funds directly in Government Securities with a view to obtaining better return.

Besides, the Sponsoring Banks have also asked to play a more active role in fund management, staff training and internal audit of RRBs.

Seizure of narcotics

1398. SHRI KALPNATH RAI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of seizures effected in bulk quantities of narcotics like hashish, heroin, etc. in different places during the last six months;

(b) what is their estimated value and how the seized narcotics were disposed of; and

(c) what steps are being taken to tackle the problem of drug trafficking?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) A statement showing significant seizures of drugs, made in different places of the country, from 1.8.1987 to 31.1.1988 is enclosed (*See* below)

(b) No precise value of the drugs seized can be estimated as this is dependent upon various factors like quality of the drugs, place of origin, etc. The confiscated drugs ripe for disposal after due legal proceedings, are sent to the Government factories. While opium and morphine are further processed, other drugs are destroyed.